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EDITORS' TABLE.

EDITORS: A. S. PACKARD AND E. D. COPE.

— Naturalists will be the gainers by the present discussion of the question as to the existence of objects of more or less than three dimensions. We are accustomed to regard mathematics as exact, and in its true function as the science of *relations* it is so. But we have not always remembered that it may treat of the relations of imaginary quantities as readily as those of real ones. Hence it need not surprise us if the mathematical mind sometimes concerns itself but little with the question of the reality of the subjects of its discussions. This is the explanation of the extraordinary mental phenomenon displayed at the present time in the attempt, by some men of much acuteness, to persuade themselves and others of the existence of objects of two and four dimensions. The argument rests on the *very transparent* assumption that because we usually see only the surface of things, *i. e.*, two dimensions, such surface has an existence apart from the three-dimensional body of which it is an aspect. The deduction then follows that if from the perception of two dimensions we can rise by mental process to a perception of three dimensions, why is it not possible that some minds can rise from the third dimension to a perception of a fourth. The naturalist, however, will expect a third dimension before he will permit himself to believe that he has an object, and any one who would do otherwise would soon find himself in the limbo of the damnati. We invite our two and four-dimensional friends to give us a *systema naturæ*. Let them have their Linnæus, Cuvier and Darwin. We fear, however, that two-dimensional objects placed edgewise to the line of vision would be overlooked by these gentlemen, while for four-dimensional beings a new teratology would have to be written.

— Professor John Collett has been removed from the position of State geologist of Indiana, and Professor J. Maurice Thompson has been appointed in his place by the legislature of Indiana. This change is from purely political motives, as nothing was alleged against Professor Collett unfavorable to his administration. We regret this change without knowing aught against the new appointee, as we regret all changes in scientific official relations without due cause. And when the incumbent is an accomplished geologist who has done much good work, and

the new officer is entirely unknown in science, the cause for regret is the greater.

— The bestiarrians are getting into trouble through their misrepresentations and libels. We learn from the *Journal of Science* that one Ernst Weber, in Germany, has been imprisoned for six months for making false assertions respecting the physiological investigations of Dr. Pelz. Professor H. N. Martin, of Johns Hopkins University of Baltimore, publishes a vigorous contradiction of the assertions of some British bestiarrians, and protests against their statements as libelous. In Philadelphia Dr. Wister, addressing the Women's Society for the suppression of Physiology, calls vivisection "a crime." On the other hand Dr. W. W. Keen made vivisection the subject of his valedictory before the graduating class of the Women's Medical College. He demonstrated the importance of this branch of physiological research.

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RECENT LITERATURE.

RECENT PALÆONTOLOGICAL REPORTS OF THE SECOND GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF PENNSYLVANIA.—It is now four years since the appearance of Mr. Lesquereux's two splendid volumes on the coal flora of Pennsylvania and the United States, with an atlas of eighty-seven plates. During the last year the third and last part of this great undertaking has appeared. Besides additions and corrections of the first and second volumes, there is a table of species referred to localities; a table of species referred to formations and a revised index of generic and specific names, referred both to pages and to plates, for all three volumes. The bulk of the third part is, however, devoted to descriptions of the new species obtained not only from Pennsylvania but from Arkansas, Rhode Island and other parts of the country. The number of new forms, many of them beautifully preserved and of great interest, fill twenty-six plates. Mr. Lesquereux remarks: "Like the vegetation of the present epoch, that of the Carboniferous has been modified and diversified by local circumstances, and is therefore differently represented at different localities if separated by a considerable distance. This can easily be seen in comparing the coal flora of Pennsylvania and Ohio with that of Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, etc. A certain degree of relation only is recognizable between the plants of strata of the same stage; but a large number of species are only locally found. The differences in the vegetation are still more marked according to stratigraphical distribution of the measures, or between the plants found in strata of different horizons; and as new coal-fields have been